DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 341 100 CS 507 707

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TITLE Dropping the Bomb in CEDA.
PUB DATE Oct 91
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (77th, Atlanta, GA, October 31-November 3, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audience Awareness; *Debate; Higher Education; Identification (Psychology); *Nuclear Warfare; *Persuasive Discourse; *Public Speaking; Rhetorical Criticism
IDENTIFIERS Burke (Kenneth); *Debate Theory; *National CEDA Tournament

ABSTRACT

Given a choice of one argument, most Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) competitors would choose the nuclear war scenario, which attempts to capitalize on apocalyptism. A three-stage methodology can be applied to apocalyptic appeals. First is an application of the concept of universal audience, composed of all reasonable and competent people. A debater makes a good argument by satisfying the universal audience's motivations. The second tier of the methodology, psychological force, comes from the debater's use of the inherent power behind apocalyptic appeals. Debaters empower judges by enabling them to decide on an apocalyptic issue. Kenneth Burke's terms--identification, hierarchy, and transcendence--underscore the final stage of the methodology. Debaters must: (1) structure appeals to underscore identity with the audience; (2) use hierarchy to explain how a round should be decided; and (3) provide transcendence by enabling judges to choose the side that best prevents the apocalypse. Two case studies from elimination rounds of the CEDA National Tournament demonstrate how these methodological concepts are manifested. Understanding the mechanisms of apocalyptism can highlight the educational value of such appeals for debaters. Increased awareness of apocalyptic appeals among debaters, judges, and lay folk can only better serve CEDA, forensics, and society. (Fourteen references are attached.) (SG)

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Dropping the Bomb in CEDA

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Paper presented to the 1991 Speech Communication Association Convention in Atlanta, GA

CS507707

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SCA 1991

Dropping the Bomb in CEDA

If a CEDA debater had to rely upon only one argument, what argument would a debater want in his briefcase? More times than not, debaters would turn to the nuclear war scenario, and more times than not they would win. The significance of nuclear war scenarios in the Cross Examination Debate Association begs the question, "what makes them work?" Why are they useful? Nuclear war scenarios attempt to capitalize on apocalyptism. Research abounds surrounding the use of apocalyptism in politics, literature, advertising, and religion, but scant research exists concerning how the apocalypse functions in debate. Initially founders of intercollegiate debate developed debate to augment education and provide a forum where ideas could be discussed, developed, and researched. Does escalating debate rounds to apocalyptic appeal serve this function? Answering this question involves looking at the mechanism by which apocalyptic appeals work. In order to accomplish this task, I first present two case studies from elimination rounds of the CEDA National Tournament, develop a methodology of analyzing these cases, and finally observe how these methodological concepts manifest in these case studies.

Apocalyptic appeals frequently take the form of nuclear war scenarios or environmental disasters that according to William

Harmon and C. Hugh Holman in A Handbook to Literature often have the character "of imminent catastrophe" (32). The two professors continue explaining that apocalyptic appeals are "likely to be grandiose or unrestrained and wild, and often suggest final judgment" (32). I can now turn to this discussion with a working definition of apocalyptic appeals.

The initial example of apocalyptism within this paper comes from the first CEDA national final held on April 7, 1986, between Florida State University on the affirmative and McCalester College on the negative. The two teams debated the following resolution: "Resolved that membership in the United Nations is no longer beneficial to the United States." The negative team, McCalester, won this debate on a five to two decision from a distinguished panel of judges consisting of coaches from around the country. The importance of apocalyptism begins to show in the first negative speech by Molly McGinnis. McGinnis uses the threat of nuclear war as her apocalyptic appeal. She argues that the U.N. slows proliferation of nuclear weapons thus preventing nuclear war. Initially McGinnis claims that the United States is the key member of the International Atomic Energy Association. She continues by saying that the IAEA benefits the U.S. and she substantiates the claim by quoting Robert Keohane, "An international regime discouraging proliferation has been greatly aided by American policy" (152). Thirdly McGinnis explains that the International Atomic Energy Agency is the most important element in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons; continuing this line of reasoning, she shows that the current system for

combatting nuclear proliferation works. Finally, McGinnis quotes Lawrence Scheinman explaining how disaster would occur if the United States withdrew from the United Nations, "The proliferation of nuclear weapons to more countries would increase prospects for their use, risk involving the superpowers, and raise the possibility of cataclysmic nuclear war" (1).

In this round, Florida State suggests that the team that best supports national interest should win. It only takes a few logical steps from this method of deciding the round to see the relevance of a nuclear catastrophe.

The final round of the 1989 CEDA National Tournament provides a second case of apocalyptism to study. This debate took place between Gonzaga on the affirmative and Southern Illinois on the negative 3 April 1989. The resolution follows: "Are increased restrictions on the civilian possession of hand guns in the United States justified?" Gonzaga won a four to one decision. In order to use apocalyptism, debaters must leap beyond the obvious concerns of the resolution. In this case I look at an unsuccessful apocalyptic appeal instead of another successful usage. Southern Illinois argues in their first negative speech that by restricting handgun possession the current system of government (the patriarchy) becomes entrenched preventing possible changes that could surmount the growing environmental problems. In simplest terms, the argument suggests that the affirmative team causes the collapse of the environment by supporting the current government. John Lapham of Southern Illinois explains first that the world currently rests on the

edge of extensive changes; the world's outlook and organization needs to change to solve the global crises. Secondly, Lapham points out that the freedom to own firearms promotes a new world order. He explains the importance of this new paradigm by quoting Professor William Marina, "The new paradigm is closely linked to science and to an ecological general system world view" (445-6). The debater from Southern Illinois shows that the current world situation warrants a shift from the current government to a more environmentally sound approach. Mr. Lapham quotes Thomas Sancton to emphasize the importance of this new world view:

> Let there be no illusion. Taking effective action to halt the massive injury to the earth's environment will require a mobilization of political will, international cooperation and sacrifice unknown except in wartime. if humanity is in a war right now, and it is not too Draconian to call it a war for survival. (30)

This argument applies logically to Gonzaga's claims that are based on justifying increased restrictions on firearm ownership, thereby supporting the current government. Important to note, Gonzaga asks the judge to weigh the round on legal precedent, rational basis, and compelling state interest. Though not obvious, room exists for an apocalyptic appeal within the scope of compelling state interests and/or rational basis. Why do SIU's claims fail to sway the judging panel? In order to answer this question and the question of why McCalester's appeal worked,

I present the following methodology of analyzing apocalyptism in CEDA.

For looking at apocalyptic appeals in CEDA, I suggest a three stage methodology. The first stage uses Chaim Perelman's concept of "universal audience;" secondly, in order to appeal universally, the argument must have some inherent power or psychological force. Finally, I apply these apocalyptic appeals by using three mechanistic terms from Kenneth Burke's "Dramatistic Analysis."

Chaim Perelman's universal audience provides a useful tool for analyzing the role of the audience in CEDA and the nature of debate. The two participating teams in a debate round do not know the specific judge until just before the round; additionally, teams eventually run into an unfamiliar judge forcing them to use more effective arguments that appeal universally.

What appeals work in the most circumstances? Debaters assume that their audience has at least an adequate education and functions rationally. This idea of who the judge is corresponds nicely to Chaim Perelman's universal audience. Chaim Perelman, in "The New Rhetoric: A Theory of Practical Reasoning," explains debate as rhetoric not dialectic:

> Truth, it was held, presided over a dialectical discussion, and the interlocutors had to reach agreement about it by themselves, whereas rhetoric taught only how to present a point of view-- that is to say, a partial aspect of the question-- and the

decision of the issue was left up to a third person. (1084)

In CEDA, the third party judge acts as a physical manifestation of the universal audience. The universal audience according to Perelman "encompasses all reasonable and competent men [and women]" (1086). Orators can use Perelman's mental construct to develop arguments and positions. In presuming the judge acts as any rational human being, the debater also assumes that the biological, social, and psychological needs that motivate other people drive the universal audience as well. In this sense, the universal audience serves the first purpose pointed out in Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric. "First, it [the universal audience] serves as an aid in the choice of arguments and appeals" (Foss 109). Perelman's concept of universal audience functions in a second more important manner, "as a norm or a standard for differentiating 'good arguments' from 'bad arguments'" (Foss 109). By satisfying the universal audience's motivations, the debater makes a universal appeal or a "good" argument. Specific to apocalyptism, the debater concludes that the average individual (the universal audience) does not want the apocalypse to come today and would act to avoid it; this assumption feeds the universal appeal used by the debater. The concept of universality must capitalize on a psychological force that moves all humanity to succeed.

Psychological force, the second tier of this methodology, comes from the debater's use of the inherent power behind apocalyptic appeals. In The Sense of an Ending, Frank Kermode

explains, "Men . . . to make sense of their span they need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives" (7). Humanity naturally develops stories of origins and ends; all civilizations have myths and/or religion explaining the fate of the world. Ends make periods important. To date, the nuclear war scenarios and environmental disasters that debaters forecast have not occurred. David Cratis Williams in "Nuclear Criticism: In Pursuit of a 'Politically Enabling Deconstructive Voice'" states that nuclear war "is a non-event and to that extent is something that 'one can only write and talk about'" (195) Still the position carries persuasive weight.

In a critical profile, Professor Ronald Reid explains that apocalyptism is "a potentially powerful force in modern culture" (qyd in Harvey 280). Professor Reid clarifies that apocalyptism has flourished when "people were unhappy with their present and uncertain about their future" (qtd in Harvey 280). Today, the superpowers have developed grand strategy based on "Mutually Assured Destruction"; they have created the means of apocalypse. With the means of ending the world in someone else's hands, people find themselves without a sense of control over their own fate.

An appeal to nuclear war in debate brings to light a way to control what a moment ago was uncontrollable. According to Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life, the desire for control dominates the causes of many mental disorders (Carson 191). Human beings naturally desire control, but the present world situation does not allow it. Debaters empower judges by giving

them a sense of control by tasking a judge to decide on an apocalyptic issue. This psychological force makes the apocalyptic appeal useful when persuading a universal audience. But how do debaters use this psychological force during the debate round? Kenneth Burke's dramatistic model helps explain the mechanism of debaters' apocalyptic appeals.

Kenneth Burke gives the final stage for this methodology by developing the terms, identification, hierarchy, and transcendence in his dramatistic analysis. The authors of Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric point out that identification equates to persuasion according to Burke. To succeed, debaters must structure their appeal to identify with the audience's wants, desires and prejudices. The authors explain another more subtle use of identification; "persuasion is the result of identification: 'you persuade only insofar as you can talk his language by . . . identifying your ways with his'" (Foss 158). In this sense, the debater must now deduce the position of the audience and assimilate his arguments to the preconceived notions of the audience. The debater assumes that the universal audience does not want the world to end; so the debater identifies with the audience by providing a way to stop the apocalypse.

Secondly, the debater uses hierarchy by explaining how the round should be decided. Hierarchy for Burke means "any kind of graded, value-charged structure in terms of which things, words, people, acts, and ideas are ranked" (Foss 174). Apocalyptic appeals use hierarchy to allow individuals to gain authority and

control by deciding upon apocalyptic issues. Finally, the judge must be furnished with a means of transcendence, a way of getting, to the desired ideal that sits near the top of his or her hierarchy. The format of debate and the debate ballot provide a means of transcendence by allowing the judge to choose for the side that best stops the apocalypse from occurring.

Now I turn to applying this methodology to the specific cases presented above to discern why McCalester could be successful while SIU failed when both use apocalyptism.

I begin the application by looking at McCalester's successful use of apocalyptism. In McCalester's argument, nuclear war appears as the apocalyptic appeal. The argument simply states that if the United States pulls out of the United Nations, nuclear war will follow because of the resulting decreased power of the International Atomic Energy Association. McCalester's final point asserts the danger of America's withdrawal from the United Nations, "The proliferation of nuclear weapons to more countries would increase prospects of their use, risk involving the superpowers, and raise the possibility of cataclysmic nuclear war" (Lee 242). The words nuclear war and the vision of the end of the world provoke reactions in human beings; as Kermode explains the "end" carries a psychological force. Dr. Kermode states that this form of apocalyptism is a "naive apocalyptism [which] has been modified (under the pressure of great new systems of knowledge, technological and social change, of human decision itself) to a sense of ends only loosely related to older predictive apocalypse" (27). With the

initiation of apocalyptism complete, McCalester can allow the psychological force of the appeal to take effect. To succeed, the debaters from McCalester must apply this argument through Burke's mechanisms of identification, hierarchy, and transcendence. In McCalester's final speech, they finish identifying with the audience by taking responsibility for providing an avenue to prevent nuclear war; McCalester accomplishes the identification by personalizing the argument. "Of course, it stops wars and I indicate that that is good in and of itself. And if their national security criterion is number one, then that would make it relevant to the round" (Lee 265). The debater shows that this appeal relates to this round in light of Florida State's weighing mechanisms that explain that the team best protecting national interests should win the round. McCalester won the round by successfully identifying themselves with the universal audience's deepest desires and motivations and by taking responsibility and credit for providing an opportunity for the judge to stop the bombs of nuclear war.

How does Burke's idea of hierarchy illustrate what McCalester attempted to do? Remember, hierarchy explains how people gain authority by placing their ideas and themselves near the top of a hierarchy or societal order. In this sense, hierarchy provides an actual avenue for the idea of mankind's drive toward control. The debaters give the judge authority to rule over the fate of the world by capitalizing on the role of the judge in the debate format. The situation thrusts the judge into a position that on the hierarchy of world order occupies a

very high rung because the debate allows a judge to decide whether or not the United States will withdraw from the United Nations. If the judge identifies with McCalester, the judge assumes a position of power though only hypothetically. This position persuades the universal audience effectively because of the natural motivation for power; therefore the judge feels compelled to vote for McCalester.

Finally McCalester incorporates transcendence to convey the persuasive properties of apocalyptism. More than McCalester, the debate format, itself, provides for the opportunity to use transcendence. Once again the judge acts as a third party determining "universal agreement;" the judge has the opportunity to choose between two positions that influence the future. If the judge sees that one position leads to "cataclysmic nuclear war" as McCalester suggests, the judges can choose the alternative that leads to a safer better world that he or she as a rational being desires. Though inherent to any round debaters' responsibilities demand that they show which choice provides transcendence to the safer world. Above, McCalester convinces the judge that if he or she says the United States should not withdraw from the United Nations then nuclear proliferation and apocalyptic war will not occur; McCalester delivers this point by saying, "you should vote negative" (Lee 261). The debaters from McCalester utilize the structure of debate and show that the only way to transcend to a peaceful world is to negate the resolution and vote for the negative team, McCalester. McCalester makes apocalyptism work by using psychological force provided by

nuclear war, identifying with the audience, taking advantage of the world's hierarchy and natural human ambitions, and finally providing the judge with a way to transcend the negative situation created by the affirmative team.

How does Southern Illinois fall short when it tries an apocalyptic appeal in the form of environmental disaster? Southern Illinois makes it clear that the apocalypse lies near, "Humanity is in a war right now and it is not too Draconian to call it a war for survival" (Brey). SIU misapplies the apocalyptic model; particularly by not allowing the judge a sense of control, failing to capitalize on the natural ambitious hierarchies alive inside rational mankind, and failing to explain how a negative ballot transcends the present threatened world where ecological disaster looms ahead. In their second speech, SIU commits the critical errors that prevent the apocalyptic appeal from working. Specifically the debaters from Gonzaga press SIU to explain when and why this disaster will occur. West from SIU responds:

> His next argument is a typical linear thinking argument, no threshold. My first argument is that is certainly irrelevant and non sequitur. This is not a disadvantage of sorts. This is an argument suggesting that their value is a bad one and threshold issues are irrelevant. (Brey)

SIU, in effect, removes the ability of the judge to transcend the impending ecological disaster by claiming that they do not need to present a point at which this disaster occurs.

Gonzaga takes advantage of this discrepancy explaining that the judge's decision then becomes meaningless. The SIU debaters encounter a second problem with not providing a means of transcendence; they disempower the judge. The negative team puts the judge in a more threatened position by presenting an ecological disaster that no one can prevent. The final problem with this relates to the concept of hierarchy. By disempowering the judge, SIU does not satisfy the ambition in rational humanity for power. In fact SIU emphasizes the individual; West explains, "that this paradigm is indeed individualistic . . . Country ideologies are based on individuals' decisions that you make on your own with the safety of a firearm" (Brey). By making this paradigm individualistic, SIU reduces the importance of the judge to one of the masses and does not put the judge or his or her decision on a relatively higher rung of the hierarchical ladder.

SIU's final error originates in faulty audience analysis. Their form of apocalyptism does not take into consideration a universal audience; instead they identify an elite audience that views the role of the judge the same way they do. SIU identifies the judge's role as an argument critic, as opposed to rational man motivated by all the needs and desires that motivate humanity. The assumption often leads debaters to ignore the fact that many times the judge is someone unfamiliar with debate or is incapable of functioning soloely on a rational basis. SIU successfully identifies with only one judge in the round, Professor Edward Schiappa of Kansas State University. Professor Schiappa explains why he voted for the negative:

> This debate presented its judges with a choice not only between conflicting evidence and arguments, but between two <u>persona</u>: the "value-free judge"... and the "critical, value-laden judge. (qtd in Brey)

For Professor Schiappa "value-free" implies a descriptive approach, while "value-laden" implies a normative approach to judging. Because of this philosophy Professor Schiappa goes on to say, "I think Neg clearly wins the paradigm-shift argument as a substantive reason why handgun regulation is undesirable" (qtd in Brey).

Then why do four of his esteemed colleagues disagree? Professor Schiappa points out that this debate between Gonzaga and SIU provides a choice between a "value-laden" and a "value-free" judge; the more universal audience as represented by the four other judges use "value-free" judging. When SIU narrows their appeal to the "value-laden" judge, SIU neglects the issues that persuade most rational and reasonable mankind by not identifying with psychological force, control needs, and hierarchy. SIU mishandles the apocalyptic appeal and fails to take advantage of two of the three of Burke's mechanistic terms and not properly identifying the audience.

What does looking at McCalester's successful use of apocalyptism and SIU's failed use teach? The main lesson to remember is the importance of context in all arguments. Simply mentioning the words, "nuclear war" or "environmental disaster," does not warrant a favorable ballot alone. Debaters must set up the psychological force of the appeal to identify with a

universal audience. In this application, the debaters can associate with the audience and sway him or her to their camp. Once the debaters accomplish the task of identification, they must utilize the format of CEDA to excite the audience's inherent drive towards creating hierarchies and wishing to be near the top of those hierarchies. McCalester's success testifies to the usefulness of this approach. The debaters continue to capitalize on the role of the judge, by identifying how the judge's decision transcends the apocalyptic threat. SIU's failure to provide a threshold, a means of transcendence, emphasizes the importance of this step.

How does the use of apocalyptism affect the value and quality of CEDA? Debaters negate the educational value of debate when they use arguments simply to win. By understanding the mechanisms at work in apocalyptic appeals, debaters can more intelligently use such appeals and counter similar arguments more effectively. But escalating debate to apocalyptism may also bring negative effects. A debater must deal with apocalyptic appeals and forgo other positions because apocalyptic appeals work on both a conscious and subconscious level, because of the psychological force they carry and because of their success record. The weight of apocalyptic appeals demands that debaters ignore any issue on the continuum of importance between initial issues and apocalyptic issues even if the lesser concerns more directly relate to the topic. For instance, many issues exist concerning the United States' withdrawal from the United Nations prior to the apocalyptic appeals, concerns such as education,

economics, and development of human rights. These concerns directly affect the lives of all of us, but debaters cannot deal with all these issues. Prior to the acceptance of a debate topic, much discussion goes on about what new approaches, ideas, and solutions can come about through debate. By escalating issues prematurely to the immediate destruction of known life, debate as a developmental tool stops and the ideas that debaters can take from debate to the real world become limited. Debate turns into a tactical game of lives.

Apocalyptism can be a useful tool in debate but risks limiting the debate to certain issues. The apocalyptic appeal in all forms will undoubtedly continue to see widespread use in debate as in any other medium where persuasion necessitates its use. By understanding how these principles manifest in the appeals; debaters, judges, and lay folk become more sophisticated in responding to the appeal and more educated in its use. This increased awareness can only better serve CEDA, forensics, and society.

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Acknowledgements

I sincerely thank Major David Harvey for his mentorship throughout all phases of this project.